

VZCZCXRO8814  
RR RUEHPA  
DE RUEHNM #1023/01 3650932  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 310932Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5551  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NIAMEY 001023

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA, DRL/EA, AF/PDPA, AND AF/RSA  
PARIS FOR AF WATCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [NG](#)  
SUBJECT: NIGER: DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST, IVLP PARTICIPANT THANKS  
USG FOR SANCTIONS

Classified By: Public Affairs Officer Robert Tate, Reason: Section 1.4(d)

11. (C/NF) Summary: PAO met with Marou Amadou, a leading Nigerien pro-democracy advocate, for a December 28 out-briefing to prepare for his upcoming participation in an International Visitor Program (IVLP). During the meeting, Amadou shared his view that the current Nigerien administration would not last more than three months, a view that strengthens the hand of the Opposition during the ongoing Inter-Nigerien Political Dialogue (INPD) under ECOWAS mediation. He also welcomed USG sanctions against the Government of Niger (GON), which he believes will be effective and contribute to a return to democratic rule. Amadou praised the independent media in Niger, but cautioned that they are susceptible to GON bribes and coercion. End summary.

12. (C/NF) Embassy Niamey Public Affairs Officer met with Marou Amadou, a prominent pro-democracy activist, on December 28 for an out-briefing in advance of his participation in the "Grassroots Democracy" IVLP from January 23 to February 13, 2010. During a wide ranging discussion on the political crisis in Niger, Amadou, the President of the United Front for the Safeguarding of Democratic Achievements (FUSAD); founding member of CROISADE, a pro-democracy civil society organization; and spokesperson for the Front for the Defense of Democracy (FDD), shared his views on the INPD, USG sanctions against the GON, and the role of the media during the political crisis (septel).

#### The Opposition's Mediation Strategy

13. (C/NF) Amadou is a member of the opposition delegation for the ongoing INPD with the GON. Amadou said that the Opposition is negotiating from a position of strength based on the conviction that both the Opposition and the Tandja administration believe that the current Sixth Republic cannot last beyond three months. He said that now that the international community has suspended assistance, which comprises what he claimed to be 80 percent of Niger's budget, the GON will soon be unable to pay the salaries of civil servants and the military, which will quickly ratchet up pressure for political change. The GON cannot rely on China to subsidize the shortfall, he added, since China, in an effort to protect lucrative energy and mineral exploration contracts, is hedging its bets to avoid antagonizing the Opposition should they end up in power. Amadou said that the Opposition is willing to offer President Tandja a graceful exit as a temporary, honorary figurehead without a formal role during a transitional period, but that the new constitution approved in the August 4 referendum must be completely disregarded. Amadou noted that the Opposition is reluctant to reward President Tandja for his efforts to subvert Nigerien democracy, but that this was a concession it

is willing to make for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.  
USG Sanctions Welcomed

-----  
¶4. (C/NF) Amadou welcomed recent USG sanctions against the GON, including the suspension of non-humanitarian assistance, the restriction of travel of certain members of the GON, and suspension of AGOA trade benefits. He recognized that the sanctions would be painful for many in Niger, but noted that if the United States did not suspend assistance it would be seen by many as complicity with the GON. He thanked the USG repeatedly for its clear and consistent support for good governance and the rule of law in Niger, which has succored defenders of democracy and isolated the GON, adding that the people of Niger will always remember how instrumental the USG was during this crucial moment in their history. Amadou was particularly pleased to hear of the travel restrictions, saying that this would be the beginning of the end of Tazarce ("let it continue" in Hausa), President Tandja's plan to remain in office indefinitely, and rule by decree.

The Media: Willing but Constrained

-----  
¶5. (C/NF) Amadou is satisfied with the role the independent media has played during the political crisis, noting that several newspapers and broadcast media, notably Dounia Media Group, have been courageous and professional in covering President Tandja's moves to consolidate power despite a GON campaign of harassment and intimidation. He believes the GON successfully compromised a small number of individual journalists through what he termed the "jail or the envelope" approach of offering a choice between possible detention and cash bribes. The independent media in Niger operates on a

NIAMEY 00001023 002 OF 002

shoestring and journalist salaries are low, making them susceptible to such inducements. Amadou again thanked the USG, particularly for Public Diplomacy-sponsored media training workshops, vocal support for imprisoned journalists and press freedoms, and opportunities for journalists to travel to the United States. (Note: Amadou is a friend of recent IVLP Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists participant Abdourahamane Ousmane. End note.)  
ALLEN